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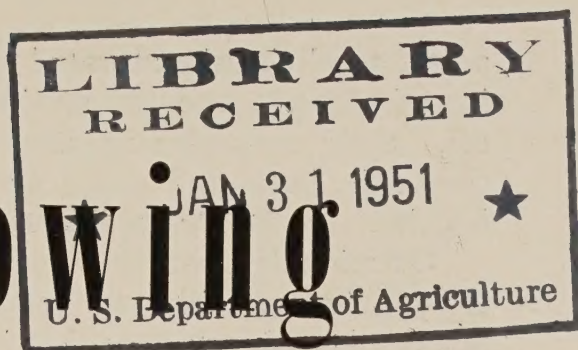
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# Growing Orchids in Your Home



*By*

C. M. KILIAN

210 Yorkshire Drive

Birmingham 9, Alabama

**O**RCHIDS ARE EASY TO GROW if you will follow these simple directions. You do not need a greenhouse to grow them at your home. During winter months you can grow them in the house. During the Spring, Summer and Fall, you can grow them on a porch or elsewhere outside.

These directions are for the care of Cattleya orchids and their hybrids, the kind most usually sold by florists. They also apply generally to others of the epiphytic (air-loving) branch of the orchid family. Different culture is required for the terrestrial (ground-loving) types such as Cypripedium, Cymbidium and others.

### WATERING

Contrary to popular belief, orchids do not require a great amount of *watering*, but do require *moisture*. A Cattleya orchid is an epiphyte, meaning that it gets its sustenance from air and moisture. Your orchid plants will, of course, need some watering but not nearly as much as you probably think. During winter months, and while the plant is in active growth, a good soaking *once a week* is usually sufficient. When the plant is not in active growth,

Cattleya hybrid orchid plants in various stages of growth, left to right: Community pot of Cattleya hybrid seedlings, ready for individual 1¾-in. pots; seedling in 1¾-in. pot; seedling in 2½-in. pot; seedling in 3½-in. pot making new growth and which should bloom on second new growth; seedling in 4-in. pot which should bloom on next new growth; seedling in 3-in. pot showing its first bud sheath; mature plant with four flowers. Plants shown are of average size; others are larger or smaller, depending on varieties.

which is usually (but not always) for one to four months after blooming, watering once every two weeks is sufficient. *Water just enough* to keep foliage from shriveling. During winter months and on *bright* days, sprinkle *only the foliage* once a day. Don't water on cloudy days unless the fiber gets very dry. **DO NOT SET THE PLANTS ON A SOLID FLAT SURFACE;** place a small block of wood or other material under the pots to elevate them half an inch or so. Air must get to the roots.

If you live in a "hard water" area, water your plants with rain water when convenient.

### SUMMER CARE

During the late spring, summer and early fall months when the night temperatures outside usually do not fall much below 55 degrees, your plants may be kept outside on a porch, hung to a tree branch or set on a rack in the shade of a tree. Some sunlight will not be harmful if it is "spotted," as when it comes through spaces between the leaves on a tree, or the slats of a porch shade or Venetian blind.

During this period, your plants will need more water than during the winter, especially on breezy days. About every other day or every third day give





them a good drenching, letting them *dry out* before watering again. Hang your plants or set them on a rack—it is essential that the air reach the roots from the top *and* bottom. **DO NOT OVER-WATER**—that is the best way to kill a *Cattleya* orchid or any other orchid. If in doubt, *keep them on the dry side*. As long as the foliage is plump or the surface or aerial roots show green tips, they're getting enough water. (Note: Root tips will not be green while the plant is resting). Never water on cloudy days—there's enough humidity then to give the plant all the moisture it needs. On bright days, sprinkle the foliage once or twice a day. The small amount of water that will drip off the leaves will give the roots all the water they'll need between heavy waterings.

Should all of the leaves of your plant begin turning a yellowish green, that's a sign that they're getting too much light or too much water. The cure is to give more shade and less water. A good color for the foliage is about halfway between a deep blue-green and a yellow-green.

## WINTER CARE OF ORCHIDS AS HOUSE PLANTS

Winter care is similar to summer care, although your plants probably will need less watering. Do not set them above or near a steam radiator or hot air duct unless you can shield them from the direct heat; such a location will dry them too rapidly. They should, of course, be kept near a window where they will get as much light, short of direct sunlight, as possible. A good way to "break" the direct sun rays is to place a net curtain between the plants and the window. You will, of course, want to keep the plants where they will not freeze at night. For convenience in watering during the winter, some owners set their plants in a tray containing an inch or so of sand, charcoal or granite (poultry size) which is kept moist. This helps supply humidity around the plant.

If you want to go to a lot of trouble you can, of course, build a case and keep your orchids in it, but that's usually more trouble than its worth, unless you have a very large number of small seedlings. If you have only a few small seedlings, you can give them greenhouse or case conditions by placing each small pot beneath an inverted tumbler, propped up just slightly on one side to permit air to get to the plant.

## CARE OF SEEDLINGS

Established seedlings in general require approximately the same care as mature plants except that they will have to be watered oftener. Being in small pots they will dry out more rapidly. Seedlings can

be given more shade than blooming-age plants. See preceding paragraph for suggestions to prevent small seedlings from drying out too rapidly.

## LOCATION

Your plants should be in a location where they will get plenty of subdued light (but not heavy shade). If you have a location only where the direct rays of the sun will strike, you should shade the plants with a piece of curtain net, cheese cloth or several thicknesses of mosquito netting. If too much shade is provided, blooming is retarded.

## TEMPERATURE

Your plants should be kept in a room where the night temperature does not fall below 50 or 60 degrees.

## OTHER NOTES

Your plants will come to you potted in osmunda fiber. The plants grow on this material. **DO NOT PUT ANY SOIL AROUND THE ROOTS**, even if the roots are exposed. Cattleya orchids and other epiphytes *do not grow in soil*. If the roots are growing over the side of the pot, that is all right—it's the plant's natural habit.

**DON'T** set the plants in water. **NEVER** set an orchid plant flat in a saucer as is commonly done with other house plants. The plant should be set **ABOVE** the surface. A wooden or wire rack will give the slight elevation necessary to permit circulation of air under the pot.

## WHEN TO CUT FLOWERS

An orchid bud usually opens very slowly. It takes about 3 or 4 days for the flowers to *appear* to be fully open. They won't be—wait another day or two before cutting if you want the flowers to last well after cutting.

## PESTS

Fewer pests attack orchids than other plants. When growing outside, snails (slugs) or sow (pill) bugs may be attracted by the hiding place the pots offer. These can be controlled by use of the usual remedies for such garden pests. You may notice ants on your plants. They are annoying but not harmful to the plants. Another pest which your plants may acquire in time is scale. It appears first as a bit of tiny white fluff and then takes on typical scale appearance. It appears usually in the axils of the leaves and at the points where the bulbs between the leaves and the roots connect to the rhizome. Use

a soft tooth brush saturated with the same strength insecticide you use for aphids and brush the scale off. Scale may also appear under the husk which covers the bulb, and which may be stripped off when it dries. *Never use an insecticide containing oil.*

Occasionally one or two of the rearmost leaves on your plant will turn yellow and drop off. Do not let that disturb you; that is normal. If all of the leaves turn yellow and drop off, that means that you have done something wrong. It usually means that the plant has been watered too much or has been chilled for a prolonged period while wet. If this happens, place the plant in complete shade and cease all watering until new growth starts.

***Orchid plants will stand a lot of punishment, much more than many other kinds of house plants. They are, however, not indestructible. They usually do well and last for years for persons who love flowers and who will follow the directions given.***

## VARIETIES OF ORCHIDS

These few paragraphs are written for the person who is buying his first orchid plants, who may want a variety in his collection, and who wants to have some idea of the kind of flowers his plants will produce.

Plants may be listed as *species* or *hybrids*. When listed as species that means that they are direct offspring of the original, beautiful jungle plants of family and variety named. When listed as hybrids, it means that flowers of one variety or family have been "crossed" or mated with another, to produce a new variety. Some persons have a preference for hybrids; others for species.

CATTLEYA orchids are those most generally sold by florists, including the hybrids formed by crossing with other species of similar characteristics. Most epiphytic hybrids are known as LAELIOCATTLEYAS, BRASSOCATTLEYAS and BRASSOLAEIOCATTLEYAS, usually abbreviated Lc., Bc., and Blc.

When the word "alba" follows the name of a plant, it means that the petals and sepals are white, and that the lip or "trumpet" is colored.

Seen less often in the flower shops, but valued by many as interesting items in a collection are *Oncidium*, with long sprays of small bright yellow flowers with cinnamon markings; *Dendrobium*, the flowers of which are small and usually white flushed with mauve; *Epidendrum*, with numerous color combinations ranging from dull greenish-white to bright orange; *Phalaenopsis*, with pink or white flowers. There are others, including terrestrial types, requiring special treatment not described in these notes.

## HOW PLANTS ARE SHIPPED

Unless indicated otherwise, plants are shipped in pots, express collect. All you need do is unpack them and begin enjoying them. Prices are f.o.b. point of shipment. Listing of plants for sale on request.

When you order, *be sure to specify second and third choice*, in the event the plants you order have been sold when your order is received.

Many who have bought plants from me have been pleased; I believe that you will be, too.

Clarence M. Kilian  
210 Yorkshire Drive  
Birmingham 9, Alabama

